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Psalms of the Sea

A Man

By EVERETT BOSTON

Let a man talk with words that tell his meaning.
We are honest folk, and any man can read our words,
But Tom-on-the-Hill's in his dotage!
"I am a mystic!" says he, "If that man from the city knows anything!"
"Words are cheap!" says we, "And you no miser! But you might talk plain; we are simple enough!"
"That's why I'm a mystic!" says he, "I don't like it, I don't like it
"But I see in my own way, and talk in my own words!"
"Were you a *man?*" asked Rod-of-the-Point, "That's all that matters!"
And Tom-on-the-Hill stared at a cloud,
"What's a man?" says he, "I been a fisherman!"
"Why a fisherman?" says Rod-of-the-Point.
"Let be!" snapped Rod-on-the-Hill, "He's an old man!"
"The eyes of women are the stars at night
"When facts are hidden!" says Tom-on-the-Hill.
(His wife's dead ten years gone Easter, and he's that way!)
"Let a woman call me a man!" says he, "Five men called me Father!"
"And all drowned!" sneers Rod-o-the-Point.
"The Hand of God ministers thru' a woman's fingers!" says Tom-on-the-Hill, paying no attention.
"He's kin to me!" says Tom-on-the-Shore, "Let be! He's thinking of Aunt Kitty!"
So we left him babbling away, aiming at nothing and having no meaning,
And went aside by ourselves to talk of Important Things—
Such as the new Fishing Regulations, and old prices.
We are plain fishermen, and Tom-on-the-Hill's getting old.

The Life of Saint Mary the Harlot

By ARCHDEACON ST. EPHRAEM

(Translated from The Latin by George Boas)

Ch. I. I should now like, dearly beloved, to tell you one and all of still another wonderful deed which the blessed man, St. Abraham, performed in his old age. For it is an example of humility and repentance edifying to wise and spiritual men. The thing happened in this way.

Ch. II. That blessed man Abraham had a blood brother, who at his death left an only daughter. When his friends and acquaintances saw her an orphan, they took her without delay to her uncle. And when the old man beheld her, he ordered her to be shut in his outer cell. There was, however, a small window between both cells through which he taught her the psalter and other holy writings, and with him she used to hold vigil, praising the Lord and singing psalms, and indeed she strove to follow her uncle's example in all forms of self-denial. She quickly grew proficient in learning her duties, and soon learned to be an example of all the virtues of the soul. The holy man prayed for her to the Lord with tears unendingly, that her mind might not be filled with the care of earthly things, for her father at his death had left her countless wealth, which the servant of Christ with his niece's consent immediately had ordered to be distributed to the needy and the orphans. She too daily besought her uncle to pray for himself, that he might be preserved from evil thoughts and the divers crafty snares of the Devil. Thus constantly she pursued the rule of her life, and her uncle rejoiced to see her achieving all the virtues, weeping and humility, modesty and resignation, and what is more sublime than these, an uncommon love of God. Passing twenty years with him in abstinence, she lived like a modest lamb or spotless dove. But when this number of years had passed, the Devil became angry with her and laid his customary snares, whereby to entangle her, that he might inflict the holy man with grief and sorrow, and to some degree, however small, however, detach his mind from the Lord.

Ch. III...Now there was a certain man, a monk by profession only, who used to visit Abraham under the pretense of edification. But when he beheld this beautiful girl through the window, he was lashed by the whips of lust and he yearned to converse with her, for a libidinous hunger had inflamed his heart as by a fire. He laid his plans for a certain space of time and after the circle of a year had revolved, he had softened her courage by his tender words. And then, opening the window of her cell, she went out to him who contaminated her with the enormity of iniquity and lust.

After he had perpetrated this villainous sin, her heart was sorely afraid. She tore to shreds the cloak in which she was wrapped and beat her face with her hands, hoping to die of grief. And bowed down under the

burden of her anguish, she was tossed hither and thither by different waves of thought, until she no longer perceived the drift of her ideas. And she wept that she was no longer what she had been and with cries uttered these words. I, she said, now feel myself dead of this deed; I have lost my days and the labor of my abstinence; my tearful prayers and the works of my vigils have come to naught. I have angered my God and destroyed myself. Oh unhappy me! Weep for me fountains of tears. I have crushed my uncle with bitterest sorrow; my soul's guilt has overwhelmed me. I have been a tool of the Devil. Why must I live longer in such grief? Ah me! what have I done? Ah me! what has been done to me? Ah me! what evil have I perpetrated? Ah me! whence and how have I fallen? How darkened is my mind! I know not how I fell nor how I became contaminated. Nor do I know how my heart became clouded over with shadows. How could I not have known what I was doing? Where shall I hide? Wither flee? In what pit shall I hurl myself? Where are the lessons of my holy uncle? Where the warnings of his brother, Ephraem, who taught me to cling to my virginity and to preserve my soul upspotted for an immortal bridegroom? Your spouse, they said, is holy and ardent. Ah me! what shall I do? I dare not look to Heaven, for I know me to be dead to God and men. Nor shall I dare go near that window. How shall I, a sinner and full of the squalor of my dirtiness, attempt to talk again with my holy uncle? Even should I dare, would not the fire leap forth from the window to burn me to ashes? Better were it for me to go off into another country where no man knows me, the more so now that I am dead and that there is no further hope of salvation for me.

She arose and fared forth into another city, and established herself in a brothel after changing her former attire.

Ch. IV. Now when this ruination was visited upon the woman we have been speaking of, a vision was shown to the blessed Abraham in a dream. And he saw a terrible serpent, foul of face and loudly hissing, as if coming from some place of his and gliding up to the cell. And there he found a dove and gulped it down and returned to his den.

Awakened from his sleep and much saddened by his dream, the holy man wept bitterly, for he thought that it meant that the persecution of Satan was being aroused against the Holy Church. So on bended knees he prayed to the Lord, saying, Thou who art the dear God of the universe, Lover of Men, thou knowest what this vision conceals.

And then again, after two days, he saw the same serpent come to his cell in the same way and place his head at his feet. And he was burst in pieces and that dove which he had devoured was found alive in his belly and he extended his hand and took her up alive. Then waking, he called that blessed maid of his again and again, thinking her to be in her cell, and he said, Daughter Mary, for thus he was wont to call her, why have you neglected for now two days to open your mouth in praises of God? But when he received no answer and remembered that he had

not heard her sing her psalms for two days as she was used to, he thought that his dream must surely refer to her. Then he groaned and wept bitterly and pouring forth tears he said, Ah me! why has the cruel wolf ravished my lamb and my daughter been taken captive? And raising his voice he said with tears, Jesus, Savior of the world, return unto me my lamb, Mary, and restore her to life in the sheepfold that my old age may not leave this world in sorrow. Deny not my prayer, O Lord, but send Thy favour speedily that she may be cast forth unharmed from the maw of the serpent.

And the two days which were revealed to him in his dream were ended by the passing of two years, in which his niece lived her evil life as in the belly of the atrocious serpent. But the holy man throughout all this time, both day and night, let not his zeal relax in praying for her to the Lord.

Ch. V. After two years, when he had discovered where she was and how she was conducting herself, he asked a warm friend of his to go to her and to inquire into all things diligently. So he whom he had sent went, and brought back word of the whole truth, because he had seen her himself. He was asked by the holy man to give him a military uniform and a saddle horse. And he set forth from his open door and immediately put on the uniform and a long hood over his head that his face might be hidden, and carrying with him much gold coin, he mounted his horse and clapped the spurs to him. And, as one desiring to explore a foreign country or a city assumes the appearance of the inhabitants of the place that he may not be easily recognized, so that blessed man Abraham used the Enemy's habit that he might rout him utterly.

Come therefore beloved brethren, and admire this second Abraham. The first Abraham went forth to battle with kings and, slaying them, rescued Lot his nephew. This second Abraham went forth to war against the Devil, so that by conquering him he might recover his niece with even greater glory.

Ch. VI. Now when he had come to the proper place, he turned into the brothel; and with anxious eyes looked hither and yon to see if he might see the girl. Then, when many hours had elapsed and there seemed to be but the least chance of his seeing her, smiling he said to the brothel-master, I have heard, friend, he said, that you have here a very fine girl. If you were to order it, I should look her over with pleasure.

When the brothel-master saw the grey hairs that come from a long life and the man's old age already feeble from the weight of years, he had no hope that he wished to see her for lechery, and he gave this answer. There is one, he said, as you say, passing beautiful.

And indeed this Mary was lovely in her beauty and comeliness beyond the demands of nature.

When the old man asked her name, the other answered that she was called Mary.

Then with glad mien, I beg you, he said, to present me to her that I may feast with her today. For I have heard that girl of yours highly praised.

She came when she was called and her holy uncle saw her in the apparel of a harlot and his whole body was

nigh unstrung with grief. But he hid the bitterness of his soul under an expression of joy, and he restrained his tears manfully, lest, if by chance the woman recognize him, she take to flight.

Ch. VII. And so, while they were sitting together and drinking, the wonderful man began to play with her. She arising wound her arms about his neck and allured him with kisses. But when she was kissing him, she smelled his frail body sweet with the tender fragrance of abstinence. And her heart went back to the days when she too had lived in greatest abstinence. And she groaned as if her soul had been pierced by a spear, and she poured forth tears. And as if she could not resist the aching of her heart, she broke into these words, Woe, woe, wretched and lonely me!

Then the brothel-master stupified said, what is it, lady Mary, why did you suddenly sigh so heavily? You have been living here now for two years today and never have groans or sad words been heard from you. Indeed I know not what has befallen you.

To which she replied, happy would I be had I died three years ago.

To this the blessed old man lest he should be recognized said with a certain serenity, Why when we are indulging in gladness have you come to remember your sins?

Oh the wonderful pouring forth of Thy mercies, God the Most High! Do you think the girl has not said in her heart, In some way the face of this man resembles the face of my uncle? But Thou alone, Lover of Men, God, from Whom is all true wisdom, hast so arranged that she can not know him and perchance flee in confusion and shame. This would be unbelievable had not the tears of Thy servant, her uncle, found grace in Thy sight, so that Thou hast made him worthy of bringing possibilities to pass out of impossibilities.

And now the holy man, taking the gold which he had brought with him, gave it to the brothel-master and said to him, Make us, I beg you my friend, the best feast possible, that I may dine with the girl. For I have come on a long journey for love of her.

Oh wisdom like unto God's wisdom! Oh spiritual thought! Oh noteworthy perception of a chance for salvation! During fifty years of abstinence he had scarcely tasted bread; now he orders meat without hesitation and he drinks that he may drag forth a soul from the mire. Oh wisdom of the wise and intellect of the intelligent! Oh discernment of the discerning! Come and wonder at this casting off of experience; come and be dumbfounded at the change of him who came here both wise and discerning and prudent and was made foolish and undiscerning that he might snatch a soul from the lion's mouth that would devour it, and from chains and the prison's shades free a soul which had been imprisoned and bound.

Ch. VIII. Then after they had banquetted, the girl invited him to bed her, saying that they would go into her chamber. And he, Let us go, he said. And when he went in, he spied the bed made high and he immediately sat himself down on it.

What should I call you; how should I name you, most perfect of Christ's gladiators, I know not. Should I dub you

continent or incontinent, wise or unwise, discerning or undiscerning? You have been accustomed to lie down on a little rush mat for the fifty years of your conversion, and how now do you mount a bed of this kind? But you have done all these things for the praise and glory of Christ, taking a lodging on your long journey, eating meat, drinking wine, and turning off into a brothel that you may save a lost soul. Yet if all this had been done simply to speak a useful word with a neighbor, we should deem it out of place.

Ch. IX. Now as he was sitting on the bed the girl said to him, Come, Master, let me remove your shoes from your feet. But he to her, Fasten, he said, the door carefully and you may draw them off. But the girl first wished to remove his shoes. But when he would not permit it, she fastened the door and came to him.

To her the old man, Lady Mary, he said, come near to me.

And when she had come near, he took her firmly by the hand as one who thought to kiss her. And taking the hood from his head and bursting into tears he said to her, Daughter mine, Mary, do you not know me? Flesh of my flesh, am I not he who nourished you? What has been done to you, O my daughter? Where are your continence, your weeping, your vigils, your fasts? How have you been turned from the palaces of Heaven into this den, my child? Why when you had sinned, did you not tell me? Why did you not tell it all to me and I would have done penance for you with my beloved Ephraem? Why have you acted so? Why did you desert me and lead me into this intolerable sorrow? For who is without sin, unless it be God alone?

And when he had said these and many other things, she remained immobile as a stone in his hand, full of shame and confusion. And again the blessed man spoke with tears, saying, Will you not speak to me, O daughter mine? Will you not speak to me, bone of my bone? Was it not on your account, my daughter, that I came hither? Upon my head be your sin, daughter. On the day of Judgment I shall plead for you to the Lord, I shall give satisfaction for your sin to God.

Until the middle of the night he consoled her with copious tears. And when she had regained her self-composure, likewise weeping she said to him, I am not worthy to be near you because of the shamefulness of my face. How can I pour forth prayers to God when I am so stained with the filth of the gutters?

And the holy man said to her, Upon me, he said, be your iniquity, O my daughter; let God demand an explanation of your sin from me. Only listen to me and come. Let us go into our own country. For hearken, dear Ephraem is grieving for you and is zealously pleading your cause before the Lord. Do not despair of the Lord's clemency, daughter; your sins may be as mountains, but His mercy overtops all creation. As we read, a foul woman was made clean and did not befoul Him but was made clean by Him; she washed the feet of the Lord with her tears and wiped them dry with her hair (*Luke* vii). If a spark can set the sea aflame, your sins can befoul his spotlessness. It is not evil to fall in battle, but it is evil to lie in dejec-

tion. Rise again bravely. The enemy has laughed at you fallen; let him feel your strength as you arise. Have pity, I beg you, on my old age. Sympathize with the suffering of these grey hairs, and rising come to my cell. Be not afraid. The race of mortals is swift to go astray; but the more quickly it fall, the more quickly it rises through the help of God, who does not wish sinners to die but to grow strong and live (*Ezech.* xviii).

She said to him, If you know how I can do penance, and how God will take satisfaction from me, give me your orders; I shall go. Proceed and I shall follow your footsteps, for you have sorrowed for me and led me out of the malestrom of my nastiness. And placing her head at his feet, she wept through the night saying, What retribution shall I make to Thee, O Lord my God, for all these things?

Ch. X. When dawn broke, the blessed Abraham said to her, Arise, daughter, and let us go hence to our cell. She replying said to him, I have here a certain amount of gold and some clothing. What do you order me to do with them?

Replying the blessed Abraham said; Leave here all those things which were got as the price of mischief.

And arising they went forth.

And placing her without delay upon his horse, he carried her off, as a shepherd, when he finds a lost ewe, bears her off joyfully upon his shoulders (*Luke* xiii). So did the blessed Abraham rejoicing in his heart go on his way with his niece.

When they arrived home he put her in the inner cell where he himself had been. He remained in the outer cell. And she clothed herself in a habit and lived weeping in humility of soul and heart and eyes. And preparing herself with vigils and the sternest ordeals of abstinence and calling upon the Lord incessantly with modesty and quietude, she lamented her deed with the surest hope of pardon. She so wisely and continuously devoted herself to prayers, that no one—unless he were without bowels—could not have pitied her, hearing the sound of her weeping. For who is so pitiless that he would not weep himself knowing her to weep? And who from the true compunction of his heart would not thank our God? Her penance exceeded all measure of grief, if it be compared to our prayers. For she prayed to the Lord so zealously that He overlook what she had done, that she demanded a sign from Heaven of the favorable reception of her penance. And the most merciful God, who wishes no one to perish but all to be converted to repentance (I *Tim.* ii), considered her penance so worthy that by her prayer health was restored to several people after the passing of three years. Therefore crowds of people used to visit her that she might pray to the Lord for their health.

Ch. XI. The blessed Abraham, continuing ten more years in this life and doing great penance and glorifying God, lay down to rest in the seventieth year of his life. His devotion filled fifty years of great worship and humility of heart and unfeigned charity.

Ch. XIV. And Mary lived five more years. And she so arranged her life and so continued both day and night her lamentations and tears and so prayed to the Lord, that passers-by in the night when they heard the sound

of her weeping were likewise moved to lamentation and coupled their weeping to her weeping. And in the hour of her falling asleep, when she was received from out this life, all who saw her pronounced the glory of God because of the splendor of her countenance.

Song Without a Guitar

By WILLARD JOHNSON

Nikral, singer of songs
Of wind-horses and lavender;

(What vagrant chord
Would you strike here?)

Girl of many lovers
And of more than many love-songs;

(A minor strain for this,
Because nothing is more sad.)

Lo, your own body
Is an image in a shrine;

(An oriental note
Or two will do).

Pale face, crossed legs,
A candle on either side;

(Now strike a chord
For each bright flame.)

And your songs worship
Exalted in front of you;

(Here play a little tune
With one finger and a thumb.)

Nikral, witch-woman,
Snake-charmer....

(And here a pause,
Exquisite as possible.)

The Philosophy of Anatole France

By N. BRYLLION FAGIN

IN October, 1924, a great Frenchman died. At once articles, essays, books, monographs, began to come off the presses of the world. All dealing with the personality of the man who had left us some books to remember him by—and any number of sparkling anecdotes. It so happens, however, in this world of ours, that anecdotes have a longer and more universal vogue than the works and thoughts of a man. The fate of Anatole France promises no exception. Already his secretary's book about him (*ANATOLE FRANCE HIMSELF*, By Jean-Jacques Brousson, Lippincott) threatens to become more widely known than any work of the master. And if it should, what would this great writer look like? A man of a thousand and one anecdotes, a garrulous old man.

Those who have read his works, rather than M. Brousson, will still be under the spell of the exquisite charm, the intense humanity, the broad understanding of life, of the master. His books have remained—the product of deep scholarship and erudition and of a tender heart and a fanciful mind. Their keenness, and their delicacy and color of diction and form are quite incomparable in modern literature. The philosophy of the man, rather than the anecdotes of his life, has remained—an exultant memory.

Anatole France saw life. He knew sorrow and he knew joy. He had seen poverty and hunger and ugliness—and had chosen to play with beautiful words and beautiful thoughts. About him it may truly be said, even though tritely, that he succeeded in lifting himself above any particular period of human history. He belonged not only to our blatant age but to ages that must come. He passed judgment on all humanity—the pushcart peddler of modern Paris, the Italian Fra of the Middle Ages, the Procurator of old Judea, saint and sinner, politician and angel. He had made his conclusions upon the significance and futility of our myriad-faceted world and was possessed sufficiently by the artistic urge to pass them on, as beautifully as he was able, to his fellow-men.

He was a sharp critic. The imperfections of our world drew his irony. The contradictions between human desires and achievements, between ideals and reality, elicited his mirth and his pity. His subtle wit lighted upon the dogmas with which man has enslaved himself—the crusted traditions, creeds, thou-shalt-nots, injustices, uglinesses. His sense of justice, particularly, was so fine as to color his thoughts on practically every form of animal life. It was an aesthetic sense. Injustice is a crime, a monstrosity, a revolting horror—because it is not beautiful. Poverty starvation, persecution, murder, stagnation are not beautiful. They are forms of injustice. He used his wonderful literary gifts in the defense of Dreyfus; he donated his Nobel prize money to the starving Russian children; he protested against the arrogant

blindness of the French Academy; he raised his voice against the mighty and the shamming and the haughty, and he allied himself with the poor and the simple and the humble.

But above his criticism came his pity. Most of the ugliness in the world springs from man's inflexibility, his righteous certainty that his visions are real and his idols divine. The manufacture of illusions, theories and hypotheses goes on eternally—and should go on. But the erection of these mere cobwebs of man's mind into adamant positivisms has resulted in intolerable slavery and anguish. Man is a little thing, a crawling thing; he knows neither how to laugh nor how to love; he knows not what to do with this world yet tortures himself with the uncertainty of another; he knows no joy. Confronted with the probability that life may be only a dream of a dream, man still is serious.

If only we could remember that "We are eternal children forever running after new playthings," as M. Sylvestre Bonnard puts it! Perhaps the tragedy of life were then not as appalling, for what sense would there be in persecuting one another, in inflicting pain and suffering for the sake of playthings? Sylvestre Bonnard knows that Count Trepoff's weakness for collecting precious match boxes is not less important than his own weakness for collecting precious books. It occurs to him sometimes, as it occurs to Nectaire in "The Revolt of The Angels," that to "kill time . . . is the sole business of life." And if so, our perplexities, even the most serious, are but episodes in a more or less plotless narrative, and who but a child will seriously break his heart over fictitious episodes?

Anatole France wrote novels, but essentially he was not a novelist. He played with thoughts rather than with plots and characters. He was happier as a poet and critic even in his novels. His style was soft, reflective, lucid, mellow. It was of the man himself. It enveloped his ideas; it shaded them off; it built them up; it pierced them, destroyed them. The pessimism of Anatole France led to a profound optimism. If reality be but an illusion and if we are the architects of our illusions, then let us build symmetrically, beautifully, with a sense of line and color and rhythm. His own words and sentences and the thoughts they embroidered were beautiful illusions.

"Let us appoint Irony and Pity to be the witnesses and judges of mankind," proposes Paul Vence, the novelist, in "The Red Lily," and Anatole France never made a secret of the subjective character of his work. In *La Vie Litteraire* he insists that art cannot but be subjective. Paul Vence, M. De Bergeret, Piere Noziére, Jerome Coignard, or whatever else their names may be, his characters closely resemble M. Anatole France himself. It is he who appointed Irony and Pity to be the witnesses and judges of mankind. It is he who laughs and cries at the drolleries of man's illusory existence. It is he who mocks our frail gods and bewails their power for misery upon us. It is he who has constituted himself the good demon "to teach (our) race arts and the joy of life."

There is work to be done for the good demons. The gods have gone into bankruptcy; they have impoverished the

spirit of inquiry, the urge to doubt, to reach out for new and larger wealth. Man has learned to accept everything and to worship everything, even himself and his own impostures. He has too many gods and too few demons. Revolt has left him, and dignity. He is a groveling creature, he prays for liberty and seeks justice in his own laws. The holy man, Fra Giovanni, looking at *The Human Tragedy* with the eyes of Anatole France, asks, "What matter of Justice being in the Laws, if it is not in men's hearts?" And the angelic Theophile learns that by putting pepper, camphor and powder on his wings he does not learn to fly into the free heavens. Liberty is beyond the reach of a decayed spirit.

The good demon, Anatole France, was a good demon indeed. He believed in the weakness of our divinities, in the frailties of our motives, in the impremanence of our emotions, in the futility of our efforts; he condemned might and cruelty and hypocrisy; he called on man to rebel against oppression, against war, against overbearing solidity, against excessive reverence, against man's own docility. But he did not forget that "Men, things—nothing is certain;" that laughter is all too little in this world; that "we ought to adorn life"—not because posterity might require it of us, but because the creating of beauty is a joy in itself. He did not forget that "victory is a spirit" which dwells within ourselves; nor did he forget to believe in a joyous future for our tragic race. An illusion? Yes, but if illusion-making be the business of life, then M. Bergeret resigned himself cheerfully to his task. He made beautiful illusions, with Hellenic balance and abandon, at the same time reserving the courage to discard them for newer, fresher ones when time had rubbed the glitter off the old ones.

But perhaps the words of old Nectaire, the fallen Angel now turned gardener and flute-player, summarize more completely the attitude of Anatole France toward man and his world. "For mankind," said the old flute-player, "I have retained my old frienship, a little admiration, and much pity, and I await, while cultivating this enclosure, that still distant day when the great Dionysus shall come, followed by his Fauns and his Bacchantes, to restore beauty and gladness to the world, and bring back The Golden Age."

Satan Dies

By CAROLINE WOGAN DURIEUX

Who grieves
For burial
In black
And powdered white
Over the effigy?

Epithalamium

By DAVID NOVAK

All night
Until dawn
Apple blossoms of pain
Blew pure and plenteously on our bed.
Loved and loved were smothered
In dark, in death-life, in fear,
The limbs of her coiled with mine, grasped
The core-sweat of me, love
Twisting life, love
Bleeding, love
Devoured, love
Before great grey gates, night
Thick poison oozing silently, hot iron
Seared, ear
Heard rumors of infinity,
Heard life weeping, fate
Crooned afar, and she heard
The song, and I the echoes
On her lips, and she
Was dark mother Zion, black hair
My shroud, pale face my charity,
And great love was stretching walls in me, killing
Me, killing me.
I kissed her mouth with my mouth, kissed her,
Mother, sister, bride in the bed.
Tender about the breasts, those two children
Sleeping, tender about her feet, she rooted
In me terribly, my eyes were
Wells of looking, a bitter apple
My mouth, she mother in me, sister, bride in the bed.

Before morning she said,
The dawn is pushing
Sure fingers around the curtains,
I am afraid.
I said,

Never do I want to see the day more,
The dawn is pushing curious fingers
Where my heart beats, the cruel dawn
Is dividing my life with opening eyes,
I will cover you and let in the dawn

The chamber was death,
And where she was lovely with white, a bride,
That was a knife-wound never
To be healed.
I was a bread cut in half,
The night devoured me,
And where she was stricken panting, a sick bride,
That was my own red heart plucked
To make a friend for her, a friend
In her bed, better than God even.
That night was my soul's funeral
Fulfilling the best genius of Golgotha.
I was the forehead crease of Cain,
She the soft remembering of Jesus,
And I know God himself fled in terror, hid
Away where he need not see,
Though a day will come
When I will love God, forgive Him
The treachery to my loved one.
Now I will weep again, with soft shoes
Tread the chamber delicately,
She is gone so I am twice alone,
Her white garment is with me.

Evolution

By H. B. ARMITAGE

I think a child should take a monkey's hand,
And say, "Whatever comes, we have it, you and I..
(ee-e-e-k, eek!)
Let us be restless, chatter, squeal and shriek,
Swing by our tails, and do indelicate things—
See the poor, desolate houses, made of brick."

Poor America!

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION

By BERNARD GILBERT

The Exiles

EZRA POUND. What brings you to Paris?

GILBERT. The wind.

POUND. An unexpected breeze. Are you writing as hard as you did in the day of the *New Age:*

GILBERT. Harder. And you?

POUND. I also. It was a pity Orage threw up the sponge.

GILBERT. The war finished him off as it did most reformers. Orage offered the public many panaceas: Guilds, Credit-Schemes, all logically perfect and guaranteed to produce an instant Millenium; but he found suddenly, with dismay, that people—*the* people—didn't want a Millenium. The will was lacking. They mostly want to be left alone. So he cleared off and left Old England to founder.

POUND. A great man!

GILBERT. The best editor of his time. I heard that you were going back to the States with Orage.

POUND. ! ! !

GILBERT. What a face!

POUND. I fled from those States and am always evading them in Europe. They stand for everything banal, philistine and odious.

GILBERT. Mm. I've just been having a talk with Sinclair Lewis.

POUND. So long as you don't bring him over here.—

GILBERT. America is producing interesting new literature. Edgar Lee Masters and—

POUND. Poor old fossil! He doesn't amount to anything though.

GILBERT. Do you read the Saturday Evening Post?

POUND. Are you trying to insult me?

GILBERT. Not consciously. I greatly enjoy most of it.

POUND. Well, Well! The kindest thing to say is that it's strange to you. There's no other excuse.

GILBERT. A new literature, I say, is arising, that may herald the salvation of those States.

POUND. Do you mean here in Paris?

GILBERT. Not exactly.

POUND. Then what do you mean?

GILBERT. You agree that current literature is washed-out, effete, that the old wells are dry, the spring filled with sand?

POUND. Owls hoot in the desert.

"I asked who there was at home:
That over there is your house,
All covered over with trees and bushes."

GILBERT. That's Whaley's translation! Why do you admire Chinese poetry?

POUND. It's real.

GILBERT. And do you call your compatriot Elliot real?

POUND. Like me he fled those States and is taking fresh root in an older and better world.

GILBERT. Following the classic example of Henry James. You re-

member what he had to say about the risk?

POUND. There was a certain apprehension at the back of his mind for a time that he mightn't succeed. But he did succeed. Gloriously.

GILBERT. Perhaps.

POUND. No perhaps. Henry James is one of the very great ones.

GILBERT. He was the first serious student that we had of the craft of fiction. He was aware of the danger to the artist of a severance of his roots from his native soil. He tells how Turgenev used to return periodically to Russia to draw new strength from her breast.

POUND. That was a sign of weakness.

GILBERT. No. It was a sign that Turgenev hadn't been entirely lost. There was still soil around them.

POUND. Around what? What are you talking about?

GILBERT. When the artist leaves his native heath he bears away some soil round his roots and that soil keeps him alive—for a time. But unless it is renewed the root withers and the artist dies.

POUND. He can take fresh root.

GILBERT. Everything is possible, but some things are improbable.

POUND. How do you pretend to tell whether an artist is alive or dead?

GILBERT. Dame Peach once told me that you can stick a dead thistle in the ground, but it won't hold its head up for long. If it has living root it holds fast and neither wind nor rain can overthrow it. By the very reason of its flourishing you may know it has root.

POUND. I don't see the analogy.

GILBERT. Henry James was a very great technical expert but he never *lived* in Europe. You may see that already. If an artist has life then he persists after his body perishes. James was a dead transplanted thistle and as soon as he toppled over it was apparent for all beholders. You will hear no more of Henry James.

POUND. I disagree entirely. Its true that James wandered for quite a time in the wilderness and lost vitality thereby, but it is wrong to say that the artist cannot be transplanted. Look at Shakespeare. He left his native heath and only returned to make his will.

GILBERT. Shakespeare would take us too far afield. He was uprooted, he was the first and greatest of our English disruptive artists. But let us rather return to America.

POUND. No thanks.

GILBERT. In spirit.

POUND. There is none.

GILBERT. No European visitor is able to make up his mind about your native country. The problem is too vast and complicated. Can a civilization be transplanted? Is it taking root? Will it topple over at the first real storm? For it hasn't had one yet, you know, since it became a modern nation.

POUND. On your analogy it can't take root.

GILBERT. I was referring to artists and cannot go further. The problems of course are allied and I follow American literature with the utmost interest.

POUND. More attention than interest; more interest than profit.

GILBERT. Sinclair Lewis says—

POUND. Don't talk of that pet of the Saturday Evening Post. I've just had the pain of reading an article on him: How his scorn, rage and rebellion accumulated through his youth and middle years, and how-mark you-he is one of the four men on earth who have received fifty thousand dollars for the serial rights of a novel. A useful accumulation for a prophet!

GILBERT. He deserves what he earns. But I was saying I take the *POST* because it is—so far as I know them—the best and most representative of modern America.

POUND. Your condemnation is more severe than mine.

GILBERT. Now I can't read *any* English story-magazine.

POUND. You are getting in the *POST* tales of a foreign country in your own language and thats a mixture of the strange and the familiar which intrigues your interest. If you had been born in the States you would speak of the *POST* as you do of the *DAILY MAIL.*

GILBERT. I don't mind the *MAIL.*

POUND. Well then *COMIC CUTS.*

GILBERT. I know exactly what interests me in the *POST.* One half of its stories and articles are about the actual *life* of America; adventures in shops or mines or in trading. These are amazingly good. They're true. The other half are copies of European sentimental literature, and are unspeakable. They take our worst traits and add their own specialties. The contrast is amazing. Its like having Bunyan and Congreve writing for the same magazine.

POUND. In the States art and business are run together. You have writers there who *know* business; and in England there is no such thing: if you like the combination.

GILBERT. How true! When you mix with the literary people in London you find that they scorn business. They speak of merchants and traders always as scoundrels. They have no conception whatever of the greatness of their nation.

POUND. What about Bennett?

GILBERT. I must except him, to some degree.

POUND. The fact is, Gilbert, you're not an artist. You're a journalist. You're a propagandist. But not an artist.

GILBERT. Maybe not. I certainly think nothing of current Art, in Europe, which is divorced from actuality. But your story-tellers in the *POST* ring true.

POUND. Jack London started that school.

GILBERT. I always liked him. It seems that a new Art—or no—I will put it that there is perceptible in your States a revival of the medieval art of Europe.

POUND. You're welcome to all of it. Give me the Renaissance.

GILBERT. You will have to retire to a very secluded spot, like that Count Whatsisname in "Fanny's First Play."

POUND. Seclusion is easy in France or Italy.

GILBERT. And in peaceful seclusion, in a sort of blissful vacuum, you are producing your great art?

POUND. Undisturbed by the raucous voice of America or its echoes from Albion!

GILBERT. The world is too much with us. We shall see. Or rather, we

sha'n't live long enough to see anything.

POUND. Let us persevere, each in his own way, to produce Beauty.

GILBERT. A dead beauty?

POUND. BEAUTY never dies.

GILBERT. But takes new shapes? I suspect it in the skyline of New York! If I'd been born there I'd have wanted to examine that skyline with attention.

POUND. Nothing prevents your going to do it, Gilbert. Indeed, I will prophesy that you do go....and edit a paper there.

GILBERT. This being the worst fate you can devise? But I hate journeys and Old England is enough. My roots are there.

POUND. Roots can rot as well as wither.

GILBERT. One for you! And you shall have the last world. I must hurry. Farewell.

POUND. Let me know when you land in New York.

Twilight

By MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

The sunshine faded from the street outside
And through the window a grey twilight shone;
I watched your face, quiet and clean as stone,
You finished speaking, the last sentence died

Leaving a restless ghost of words to linger
And waken unborn words from their troubled sleep;
Slowly the silence grew more close and deep
Touching your silent face with a blurring finger.

And that was all. I rose to leave you soon,
Perhaps we parted on a note of laughter,
Seven o'clock in April....not much after,
And in the street I found it afternoon.

But something had moved between us, and it cast
A curious, haunting twilight when it passed.

Wild Apples

By MAJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

What I was made for, no-one knows,
Artist, wanton, wife or nun....
Weed to weed, and rose to rose
Aeon after aeon grows;
On what plan was I begun?

When I was young, I made a vow,
Pruned away all loves but one.
Orchard tree am I, but now
On deep roots and outflung bough
Hotter, hotter beats the sun.

On this quiet orchard tree
Proper winter greenings grow;
On the fallen boughs of me
Sweet despairing blossoms blow,
Wild red apples, none shall see.

On what plan was I begun?
Now it is too late to know.
Artist, wanton, wife or nun,
Of the four I chose but one
Long ago and long ago.

The Stone

By HELEN HOYT

Pale feet,
You are pale as grass that has lived under a stone;
You never get into the sunshine of the wide air.
Cramped yellow grass,
How queer you look when we take the stone off!

The Poet of Montsalvat

By CAREY Mc WILLIAMS

"Surely all things are vain, and great thanksgiving
Is due not; surely all things now are vain.
And all my heart is fain
Of something, something, far too great for living;
Nothing is very sad, nor wonderful,
Nor beautiful."

THESE lines from Park Barnitz's, "The Book of Jade," are as complete a summary of his philosophy of negation as one could desire. They suggest, with their affected air of ebony resignation, a story by the late James Gibbon Huneker that appeared in the old *Smart Set* for February, 1917, called "A Modern Montsalvat." The characters, in this thoroughly Hunekeresque story, form a club devoted to the pursuit of unhappiness, based upon Schopenhauer's philosophy. Huneker describes them as "Men who abandoned their ambitions, successes, friends, families, to plunge beyond hope of redemption into a mental condition, a satanic apathy and a slavery worse than drug; yet gleaning an exquisite joy in the abstention from joys, an intellectual debasement, a slow strangling of the will, and delight that comes from dallying on the forbidden borders of pain and pleasure.—These men had not the absorbed look of devoutness and interior exaltation that I have caught on the face of an Oriental. Nor were they lotus-eaters. Eastern ideas cannot be grafted upon the West; evil must result." In this passage Huneker tells the story of Park Barnitz; the habit of mind underlying such pessimism is admirably stated, although its causes are left unanalyzed.

The story of Park Barnitz is one that is known to only a very few collectors of rare books. This is not extraordinary, but is just as it should be. Barnitz's story is interesting only in so far as it throws some light on a certain habit of mind, and on American culture of some forty years ago. His poetry has but little value detached from the far greater poetry of his life, but, as is so often the case, the minor poet is sometimes of the utmost significance in a study of the civilization in which he lives.

Barnitz was born in Kansas in 1877. He went to the University of Colorado, at Boulder, and later to Harvard where he studied under William James and Barrett Wendell. What he though of Harvard is very clearly shown by these lines of verse written in his twenty-first year and called "Harvard"—

"Professors sit on lofty stools upcurl'd
Through Yankee noses drooling all day long;
I find all these things quite ridiculous.

Before despis'd old age comes over us,
Let us step into the great world ere long.
We shall be very grand in the great world."

In 1901 Barnitz published his one volume of verse, "The Book of Jade," (Doxey's, San Francisco), and the following year he died at the age of twenty-five of drugs, for he had early been addicted to drugs, saying as he did, that

"Naught is more sweet than gently to let dream
The pallid flower of life asleep alway."

Such is his story, as I have been able to derive it from the only mention of him in print, that of Floyd Dell's article in *The Nation*, April 16, 1924.

The most outstanding characteristic of his verse is its extreme pessimism, his super-Byronic despair. His is the old world-weary sickness of Swinburne, mirrored in lines of the same pale and delicate and musical beauty,—of a beauty like an orchid, only not as natural. Barnitz's verse is at best but an echo of the poetry of the Beardsley school, of Dowson, of Lionel Johnson, of Arthur Symons. A glance at the names of his poems will show what an anomalous bit of work the whole volume was to appear in America at such a time as 1901. There are to be found such Swinburnian titles as "Astoreth," "Parfait Amour," "Opium," "Ennui," "Helas," "Louanger D'Elle," "Miserrimus" and "Poppy Song."

Barnitz might easily be classified as a minor poet of the decadent eighties and nineties, although his work is not so finely wrought, nor so studied, as his masters. It is, however, a plant of the same species. And yet this orchid of American verse had its being in Kansas and Colorado, where corn-tassels and dandelions are the only orchids. Of all the decadents, it is Dowson that Barnitz most resembles; there is an extraordinary similiarity between the work of these men. Barnitz's "Evening Song" might have been written by Dowson, particularly these lines:

"Lo, all the passionate pale evening
I lay between the breasts of my beloved,
Among the lilies, in the lily garden.
The sky was pale, and all the sunset faded,
And all the stars I saw not in the heaven,
Because the glory of her face above me
I saw alone, wrapt in a dream of slumber."

Yes, it is to the decadents that Barnitz belongs. The decadents, in their turn, derived from Oscar Wilde and Joris Karl Huysmans, and Charles Baudelaire, to whom, en passant, Barnitz dedicated his volume.

Of his own verse Barnitz said:

"And since I could not slumber all the time,
I, in sweet golden rhyme,
On white papyrus scented with patchouli
Wrote masterpieces starry-beautiful."

These lines simply smack of the English poets of the Rhymers Club. Why Arthur Symons even vaunted that his verse smelled of patchouli and defended it on this charge!

The problem in Barnitz's case is to account for his attitude. Here in 1901, in healthy, moral, vigorous, growing America, the land of corn and factories and rampant materialism, appeared this pale wan flower of yestereve, this "bruised butterfly of last night's sin," to borrow from Richard Le Gallienne. How was it possible, it will be asked, that two so discordant personalities as Whitman and Barnitz could have been produced by the same civilization? Whitman with his immense cosmic gaiety and faith and love, his hearty acceptation of all life offered, was indeed, a marked contrast to the poor drugged soul of Park Barnitz with his strange phantasies, his eroticism, his denial of all values; his denial, in fact, that values existed.

The superficial explanation of this problem is simply that of "drugs." The unseeing always said of Dowson that his beautiful lines were the result of excessive drinking and use of drugs. But such an explanation does not satisfy the truly curious. Can you explain Whitman solely by saying that he did not use drugs to excess? Partly, perhaps, but the truth is that drugs were

in Barnitz's case more of a result than a cause. The question more properly should be, "Why did Barnitz use drugs?"

The explanation of peculiar aspects of character is best to be found, as a rule, in a study of the civilization in which the individual lives. As Mark Twain said: "The influences about the human being create his preferences, his aversions, his politics, his morals, his religion. He creates none of these things for himself." One has but to read the novels of Theodore Dreiser to gain a vivid picture of the early middle-western civilization in which Barnitz was reared. And the picture of that civilization, to many of us, is a memory too vivid to need accentuation. It was a civilization, and in many cases *is* a civilization, which, whatever else may be said of it, has never been one that has fostered a many-sided development of the individual. The creative life, in a word, has been subordinated to a place of the most abject insignificance. The result has been the creation of what Van Wyck Brooks so finely calls "a race of Hamlet minds." Men have been born in this middlewest, possessed of that vaguest of faculties which we call the "tendency to creative life," only to see that tendency wither and decay and die. In this civilization of intense acquisitiveness little room has been left for creative work. Packing houses and poets do not harmonize, in spite of Carl Sandburg.

What conditions the suppression of the creative impulse in a given individual will result in, is a problem in itself insoluble. It grew in Mark Twain, this cancerous growth of suppressed desire, until in his later days it fell upon him with tremendous force. It robbed Clemens of his immense gusto for life and made him a bitter misanthrope and near-cynic. It drove Henry James across the seas on his famous "pilgrimage," and it still keeps in Europe such a man as Vincent O'Sullivan. It made of Upton Sinclair a propagandist; it crucified the poet in Ambrose Bierce. But there are some natures of a gentle and poetic quality, that simply cannot live in such an atmosphere, and of such a nature was Park Barnitz. He drew aside the drable veil of reality and stepped into that land of hallucination where there were,

"Coernulian serpents marked with azure rings;
Awful cathedrals where rich shadows fall;
Hoarse symphonies sepulchral as a pall;
Mad crimes adorned with bestial blazonings."

He turned from the sordidness of the world about him to the pursuit of unhappiness, like the members of the Montsalvat Club of Huneker's story, but even there he wearied, for it was an unnatural pleasure.

"I am a little weary of the Persian
Girl that I lov'd; I am quite tir'd of love;
And I am weary of
The smoking censers, and the sweet diversion
Of stroking Lelila's jasmine-seented hair,
I thought so fair."

While the factories of a thousand towns belched forth clouds of smoke and broke the silence with a din of steel, Barnitz was in San Francisco, writing his "patchouli scented" lines and dreaming of the "sweet diversion of stroking Lelila's jasmine scented hair." What does this excess of sensation, this drunken revel of scents and sweet sounds and gay colors, mean? What is its phychological significance? Isn't it just the reaction of a soul starved for

beauty, of an artist doomed by his environment to failure? Some may rise and conquer life, if they be possessed of the power and force and energy of a Dreiser. But the average, as George Moore says, seldom rise above the level of their age.

The same spirit of instinctive belief in the integrity and beauty of the artistic ideal was what moved both Whitman and Barnitz. In the former it triumphed and resulted in, "I Sing the Body electric." It troubled the sensitive soul of Barnitz until he sought relief in that fool's paradise—hallucination—and it resulted ultimately in his untimely death. It made him write at twenty-five,

"Now I am come to the nadir at last, to the absolute sorrow,
Now all the stars are gone out of my sky;
Night everlasting is mine without hope or desire of the morrow,
And my life's hopes are gone tombwards to die."

Barnitz's story is the story of many an artist's tragedy, in a land where the only really native poets are the Frank Cowperwoods and Eugene Witlas. Yes, we have had more than our share of "Hamlet minds," and if we had a Montsalvat Club its roster would include many a well known name.

Judith

By LOUIS GILMORE

With mouth most red,
In Israel's sight
Firm is her tread.

Holofernes dread
She seeks tonight
With mouth most red.

The tents outspread
Attest his might;
Firm is her tread.

At last in bed
She lies most white
With mouth most red.

As one now dead
Sleeps Israel's blight;
Firm is her tread.

The drunken head
Shows severed quite
With mouth most red;
Firm is her tread.

The Impossible Tryst

By HARRY KEMP

An ancient legend kindles in my brain
Of Helen of Troy and Don Juan of Spain
And how they met in Hades, one great day—
Inheritors of passion's long domain!

Though one soul had, but recent, trod the way
To last, eternal twilight, while the other
In life had called the god Apollo brother,—
Contemporaneous in eternity
They were of equal age now. Young life's flower
Burst in them still! Amid the flames they stood,
Despite the Undying Worm than death more dire,
Unfading, with unending life endued....

For they burned yet with unappeased desire
That kept them young, despite the surging fire...

And God had granted Satan that great hour
To prove beyond His Will lust held no power..
And Satan, for the famed seducer's soul,
Had promised, after death, as last, rich goal,
That he'd possess this Helen of Troy in hell,
And so he'd gained him!....

In a burning dell
Where the red grass was fire their mating fell:
Therein their passion was to know brief flower...

"Sick aeons have I waited, Don Juan!"
"And were you not the hope that led me on?
Your mouth, your mouth—for infinite hunger's sake!"
And expectation, shivering through the earth,
Struck upward..half the dead were stirred awake;
Bone danced by bone, in dust, remembering bliss,
And "what strange thing" they whispered, "love, is this?"
The stocks and stones moved as if giving birth,

And flowers and trees, beginning with the root,
Shot into giant blossoms, giant fruit,
And showered the ground with ripeness and with flower
At the first kiss of that impossible hour....

The Beasts about the Throne looked down in wonder
As heaven's far blue plain began to quake..
Up, up commotion mounted: was it hell
Coming once more with banners? hell, a-new
Repeating the impossible assault,
To be swept headlong once more down the vault?

The saved themselves grew troubled....
God withdrew
His promise, with one burst of reddening thunder
Flung to hell's midst, down all the dizzying blue!

A Birthday

By VINCENT STARRETT

Next Monday, Time and I again shall sit
Over that tardy game that, years agone,
Light-heartedly I opened, knight and pawn
Boldly advanced against that master wit.
Next Monday, I shall bend my head and knit
Fierce brows above the battered board whereon
We play the contest—Life; and I shall don
New spectacles of hope—and move a bit.

Perhaps another pawn I'll wish to spend;
There is a bishop left, a rook to use,
I have a knight to curvet, if I choose;
Yet, as before, I sense the avoidless end,
Manfully, one by one, my pieces go....
When shall you finish, Time, my friend, my foe?

The Enchanted Looking-Glass

By JOHN Mc CLURE

THE scene is the laboratory of PORPHYRY ARSANO at Cairo. Before a mirror which is draped in purple damask are discovered PORPHYRY ARSANO, EUSEBIUS SCAURUS, PETRONIUS AMPHAX, DIODORUS CARNIFEX and METRODORUS ASTYANAX.

MERODORUS. And that is the engine?

PORPHYRY. A simple looking-glass, as you will see well enough when the curtain is lifted. Only the quicksilver was blessed with six charms out of the Kabbala.

PETRONIUS. If the invention is what you say it is, your study of the hermetic philosophy is justified. How did you happen on it?

PORPHYRY. Seven years' thinking and a great deal of mixing ingredients in a pot. It was not as easy as drinking beer, Metrodorus.

METRODORUS. I do not belittle your accomplishment. I am sure it was very hard work.

EUSEBIUS. And you say it will show a man what he appeared like before he last entered the gates of birth?

PORPHYRY. It will show each of his lives in retrogression back to the beginning of time.

METRODORUS. If you was a pharaoh this is a very good way to find out.

DIODORUS. Lifting the veil of obscurity is more or less hazardous. I am not eager to learn whether I was ever a pearl merchant.

METRODORUS. It would be embarrassing to learn you got hanged.

PETRONIUS. The invention, whatever else you may say, is in the interest of science. Let us test it.

PORPHYRY. You were invited for that. Will you stand in the squared circle I have drawn on the floor with chalk, Metrodorus?

METRODORUS. I would rather not know where I come from. What if I was a pig-thief?

PETRONIUS. We will never tell anybody.

METRODORUS. Perhaps you would like to stand in the circle?

PETRONIUS. I prefer to observe.

DIODORUS. My position is already clear.

EUSEBIUS. Porphyry shall stand in the circle. This invention is his. We will observe as I lift the curtain.

PORPHYRY. No philosopher to speak of is afraid of the past or the future. It is immaterial to me, I assure you, whether I was an emperor or a clam-digger before I arrived at my present estate.

METRODORUS. Then step into the circle. You can see for yourself. If you say so, we will look out of the window.

PORPHYRY. I welcome your scrutiny.

PORPHYRY ARSANO steps into the squared circle before the enchanted looking-glass.

PETRONIUS. This is a new epoch

if the invention succeeds. Lift the curtain, Eusebius Scaurus.

EUSEBIUS SCAURUS lifts the curtain of purple damask. The mirror reflects a brilliant and unearthly light like the living fire of diamonds. Then it becomes as limpid as spring-water. PORPHYRY ARSANO recites a charm from the Kabbala. Suddenly across the face of the enchanted mirror pass in rapid succession an ape, a goat, a turtle and an ass.

*METRODORUS*s Who would have expected—?

PORPHYRY ARSANO shatters the crystal to bits.

PETRONIUS. You can rely on us.

PORPHYRY. Indeed I trust you will never let this go any farther.

EUSEBIUS. You may take that for granted.

PORPHYRY. There was a mistake in the quicksilver, there was a flaw in it.

METRODORUS. I dare say.

PORPHYRY. I am sorry that I manifested an impatience unworthy of a philosopher. If you like I will serve you with wine.

METRODORUS. If the liquor is good, your secret is safe.

PORPHYRY ARSANO signals to a slave who enters with flagons of wine.

Sonnet

By W. L.

I'll build a room for you for solitude.
Rest there in quiet. The glass that banks the walls
is fused of northern ice and mountain crystals;
it bars all sound and friendly interlude.

Even wind's ghostly whisper is too crude,—
here only thought pads low with soft foot-falls,
and silence as a velvet panther prowls
on cushioned paws. The light is emerald hued.

Rest in this temple walled with molten glass.
Let earth be strange. Fear nothing of the world.
No rasp, nor mote of dust can penetrate.
I will surround you with a glaze that has
no mortal entrance: bolts of ether hurled
against it shatter: there is no magic gate.

Poems

By RICHARD KIRK

Bees

My enemy, by a wild bee gored,
(Lord, I thank thee! I thank thee, Lord!)

Indifferently my lampoon read,
Unhurt by anything I said,—

My words, like arrow-heads of tin,
Blunting on the ass's skin!

Poets are witty men like me,
But only God can make a bee.

Old People

We live a little while
Angelic or satanic;
Then go the further mile
Mechanic.

Experience No Teacher

Though I feared yesterday and found
The wild beast docile to my touch,
And no bones broken on the ground,
I dread to-morrow just as much.

The House on the Nile

FROM THE TWILIGHT OF THE NYMPHS

By PIERRE LOUYS

(Translated by JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY)

Amaryllis stretched out at ease on the moss, and with the tip of her willow branch touched the hand of the youngest youth.

"You," she said; "speak in your turn, Clinias. I would have a tale from you."

Clinias hesitated for a time.

"I have remembered the legends all the world knows; but I cannot, like Thrases, mould them to my mood, nor reclothe them like you in the grace of words, Amaryllis. I shall relate what my friend Bion of Clazominius told to me, on his return from Ethiopia."

"Is it a true story?" asked Rhea.

"Yes. But I should like to have you receive it as a fable, and to have the characters seem followed by the shadow of their symbol. If I but had talent, little pains would it cost me to make this short record a poem in hexameters. Perhaps merely to generalize."

The sun shone scorchingly above the high forest, and the freshness beneath the leaves was the more delightful. Spots of light played over Lampito, who had gathered her hair over her face, to protect her closed eyes. Amaryllis was close to Rhea. Philinna played with her hands. Melandrion looked at the ground.

Then Clinias began:

I

Beyond Thebes and Hermontis, beyond Silsilis and Omobos, Bion had mounted the Nile. He had passed even the island of Elephantis, where the lands of Egypt end, and he was advancing upon black Ethiopia, near the borders of the world. He had no vessel to overcome the slow coursing of the river, for he would have required slaves to manoeuvre the oars, and he feared to impose upon himself uninteresting companions. So he was journeying on foot, along the soft, grassy shoreline, so narrow that at times the way led close beneath the multi-colored cliffs from which soared the infinite slopes of the Desert.

That scant strip of living soil between two gloomy solitudes, that channel of golden fields and resplendent herbiage, bursting to the two horizons with the green light of the Nile, resounded with the urgent, raucous cries of birds, in the air, on the river, under the high grasses, swarming on the bare branches of the corpulent baobabs, like deafening cicadae, forever.

Ostriches and giraffes called in the far-off fields; herds of antelope fled like white clouds; monkeys hung in fantastic bunches from the yielding branches of sycamores; and at times, in the ooze of the Nile, where followed one another like tall flowers the slender steps of the ibis, Bion regarded in wonder the formidable human im-

print left by the mysterious Amanit, beast that man had never seen, but of which the Ethiopians tell strange tales. And Bion, troubled, grew convinced that the Colossi of rose granite, carved in the depths of the mountains, came in the lonely nights to bathe to their knees in the holy stream that is the father of all.

For, thus far from Thebes and Memphis, the remains of the Egyptian splendour endure in an impious land. Long ago the aborigines reclaimed the country from its conquerors, yet the face of Rameses is forever engraved on the cliffs, for the sovereigns of the North gave their form to rocks that the chisel of slaves could fashion but now neither time nor the gods shall destroy.

It was winter. The nights were cloaked in foggy damp. The days remained overwhelming. Bion sought the shade, and the forest pools, in the mimosa woods where the lions withdrew from the sun, sleeping from dawn to evening twilight. There too it was that the men lived, barricaded in their huts by date-tree palisades. Bion was their guest, night after night, leaving each with the coming of morning.

II

Now, one evening.....

"At last!" cried Lampito.

"You speak pleasantly," said the polite Philinna; "but you are too pompous. And why did you give us a sketch of Egypt before beginning your story? I suppose it has nothing to do with the remainder of the tale?"

"Be merciful," Clinias answered. "The story of Bion is quite simple; I could tell you the whole in a dozen words; but then I should have to find another and the heat forbids that labor of the fancy. Besides, it is a short scene indeed that cannot be elaborated. It had to be introduced with some useless sentences, if it was to be a tale as long as any other. All this is unanswerable. Do not interrupt me again.

....One evening, after a long tramp under the grievous beating of the sun, his worn feet already grooved with the narrow marks of the thongs, he approached a brown and green hut that rose alone on a bank of the Nile, reared of dry mud and interwoven reeds. Heavily crested palm trees grew in numbers around, and it was so encompassed with the tall grasses of the river that it seemed floating on the very stream, or dangerously caught in the marshes.

Resting motionless against a tree, Bion watched.

Two young girls, smiling at times, talked at the opening of the doorway.

The elder was standing, in a large blue fringed cloth, knotted under the armpits, draped to the knees. Her numberless black tresses were parted into a thousand fine, stiff locks, that almost framed a face with gleaming eyes and thick lips, and that fell no farther than her delicate square shoulders. Her back was bent across a low rail. She laughed slightly, tossing her head.

The younger was unclad, for she was scarcely more than a child. She was squatting on her heels, her head down between her knees, as she picked little yellow flowers from between her outspread toes.

He watched them in their liveliness, and did not come out of the shadow. He regarded the house. This place, mysterous as everything that appears

for the first time, seemed forbidden because it was alien, alone, unfamiliar. A family made its dwelling there. For how long a time? What measure of sorrow and of stealthy joy had made happy or sad that cabin of mud and branches? Who had erected it there? Who had lived in its quarters? Over what deaths, what births, had it watched? He knew that all he could learn would never reveal to him aught of its days, that this corner would be forever impenetrable.

Evening came quickly on. At length Bion stepped forward.

At once the two girls, with startled cries, retreated toward the open house. But he stopped and said simply:

"I seek hospitality."

"Father is in the fields," the elder answered. "Wait until he comes; He will welcome you."

Bion leaned against a tree and turned his eyes toward the Nile, under the curious regard fixed upon him.

Long after sunset the Ethiopian arrived following a yellow cow with tapered horns. As soon as he appeared, the two girls spoke at once.

"There's a stranger here..... He seeks hospitality.....Yes, he's alone. ....There, near the tree..... We wouldn't let him come in 'till you got back.....Was that right, father?"

The master took three steps in the darkness, and said aloud:

"Welcome to my house. Come within."

When they had entered the room and the earthenware lamps were alight,

"Here is water, here are bread and fruits," said the Ethiopian.

They drank and ate. And the host spoke nothing, knowing that it is indiscreet to ask question of him who has not answered in advance.

She whose body was draped in blue bore the food and poured the jars of water. The younger had drawn back to the clay wall, and with her hands locked across her mouth watched the stranger.

When the meal was over, the host, rising. said:

"It is time to go to bed. I know the laws of hospitality. There are my two daughters. The younger of them has not yet known man, but she is of age now to approach. Go, and take your joy of her."

Bion was not new to the custom, and he venerated it as a tradition of singular merit. The gods often move upon the earth clothed as travelers, as shepherds or as soldiers, and who will distinguish a moral from an Olympian that wills not to be named? Bion, might he not be Hermes? And he knew that a refusal on his part would be tane as an insult; therefore he was neither surprised nor annoyed when the older girl leaned toward him and uncovered her young breasts for his caressing.

Without a word, motionless, the young one watched their display; she stood erect, with her head forward, her hands fallen as in a dream.

After a moment's pallor, trembling, on the brink of tears, she dashed wildly through the open door. Night closed upon her equal darkness.

Then the father, raising his arms, in his turn walked until the dawning, plunging his eyes into the fartherest shadow, where his daughter had borne

away forever the lost honor of his house.

III

The sun was corching when Bion awoke and took up his pack to continue his journey. The house was empty.

He was sorry not to meet his host, but not surprised that he did not see his companion of the night. She was too wise to yield herself to a leave-taking.

He set out on his way.

The road that he was tracing along the reeds of the Nile was so oppressive that he soon left it for a narrow path that crossed the marshy fields and headed for the woods.

A sleeping hippopotamus had crushed an entire rice field beneath his rose and lilac flesh, and the devastation around him was the work of his shaggy jaws. Bion passed him quickly by. Shortly after, he entered the mimosa shade.

A joyous cry stopped him. A cry so tender, so thankful, so thrilled with perfect happiness, that Bion turned quickly with an involuntary smile.

The little fugitive was at his feet, nude as on the last evening, a wee bit timid, but radiant, waiting but a gesture to fling herself in his arms and weep for joy.

"You! Here at last," she said. "I did not know where you would pass. I did not even know if you were going upstream. But I knew that I should see you again. I came here, and I awaited you. I guessed that you would flee the roadway sun and take the woods. Oh! how contented I am! It seems as though I had waited here three days.... I can't say any more ....What has happened to me is so strange...."

And she added more sombrely:

"You stayed with her a long long time."

Bion stood still and looked at her in some annoyance.

"But, my dear child, what have you come here to do?"

"What!" she cried; "I've come to follow you, to stay with you forever and forever."

"You come to follow me, and yesterday when your father gave you to me you fled like a wild goat? Last night I did not please you; this morning I please you, without reason? You have queer whims."

The lass grew quiet, then burst suddenly into tears and pressed against the tree her little nude body, shaking with sobs.

More than all other plagues, Bion detested touching scenes. He tapped the child on the shoulder, and said to her:

"Goodbye. Go back to your father's. You will please him."

And he started tranquilly off.

But she ran to him. She seized him by his garment, by his arms, by his neck, and poured forth:

"I shall go where you go, I loved you yesterday as today, I have never loved a soul, I love you only, I shall never love anyone else.... I went away yesterday because I was jealous of my sister, because I could not share you with my sister, nor love you before her. If I had not fled, you would have taken me casually and would have abandoned me already. After you I should have lent myself to another, and to another, and so until my marriage. Do you know that my sister has already known more strangers than I could tell you opening

both hands seven times? And I too, was I to do that? O I feel so well that all my life I shall belong to one man, to the first that will take me. And you are the one! Lead me off, keep me forever! I wish to be your wife and to follow you."

Bion, greatly annoyed, responded:

"My dear child, you argue like an infant. You tell me yourself that you have never been in love, and I can well believe it, for in the arms of her first lover a woman dreams of the second, and in her heart it is he whom she loves. You shall discover that quite soon.

"There is no reason why you should always love the same man. Condemn yourself always to sleep under the same roof? always to wear the same garment? always to eat the same fruit? Love is not a feeling so different from all the rest, but it is the most abundant of all; that is why you must share it.

"The gods have strewn along your lips a love rich enough to satisfy an army. You have not the right to deprive others of the pleasure they hope for from you. When your sister is married, you will remain alone at your father's; then travelers will still pass by, who long before left their fireside and the holy bed of matrimony. Worn with the sun and the distant journeying, they will grow freshened through your care. You can relieve their ennui and leave in their life-story the memory of a happy day.

"In this wise, in the succession of days, the diversity of tender embraces, the rapidity of recurrent farewells, you will come to know that one should not bind oneself through love, and more wisely you will choose the man to whom you will give your life."

"How could I make a better choice? Are you not...."

"Oh! I know. I am doubtless the best, the only, and you are ever so certain that you have found your dream. Is not that so? that is what you were going to say. Well, see how mistaken you are. If I made love to you here, in this woods, I should leave you immediately after, just as I left your sister this morning. In your condition it is better for us to do nothing, simply to part. You have made a deplorable choice. Try to forget it, and go right off now without turning your head. In the House on the Nile, you will find your stricken father, your family hearth and the images of the gods. You will see your elder sister and she will teach you true virtue, of which you know only the false semblances."

He kissed her cheek and set out again on his road among the trees. But he had not passed the great bushes with their yellow flowers when for the third time he heard weeping and running after him.

Then he quite lost control:

"I forbid you to follow me!"

"I cannot leave you. Do not drive me away. I no longer ask to be your wife, since you refuse to love me. I beseech you, let me stay near by. I belong to you. Make something of me. I shall be your slave if you will."

Bion coldly untied his girdle, bound it as a loincloth around the child, hung over her bare shoulder the thong of his bulging sack with the gourd and the petasus, and in an indifferent tone said:

"Go along."

* * *

The story shocked them somewhat,

and the women were not far from thinking that Bion was an abominable person. But it was much worse when Rhea, who always wanted to know the ultimate end of stories and the final fate of all the characters, inquired:

"What happened afterwards?"

For Clinias ended in this wise:

"Before evening of the same day, Bion sold her as a slave to a nomad desert chieftain, and he does not know what became of her."

The women grew indignant, but Thrases spoke first:

"It was his clearest right. Had she not said: 'I belong to you!' The characteristic of things that belong is that they may be sold. There is nothing to be said against it, and besides she was a little fool he did quite right to neglect."

Melandryon was more severe:

"These folk here," he said, "are all too virtuous. You must not judge matters under the banner of good and of evil. These are considerations that vary with the climate, the importance of which has been greatly exaggerated. The sole rule of life that seems legitimate is regard for beauty. If the child was pretty (which Clinias failed to tell) Bion committed a grave fault in selling her to an ignorant moor who will disregard the charm of her line and the grace of her movements."

"She had a short nose," Clinias responded, "thick lips, and a dusky skin."

"In that case, no need to bother with her," declared Melandryon.

Ithaca Inhabited

By DANIEL WOGAN

No sextant had Ulysses
Or immediate beacons
Illuminating those black waters

Now
As the Ancient returns
The Sirens seem audible

But replete with this age
Of enduring winds and white-shelled coasts

Well preserved is he
For the appropriate Aphrodite

Prophecy

By MURRELL EDMUNDS

Once an old man took me by the hand,
And pointing through the twilight to the sea,
"Go friend," he said, "and seek to understand
The wisdom God is bellowing to thee."
I heard the muffled tread of many feet,
The breathless gasp a silken curtain makes,
The hollow sound of walking in the street
That awful hour before the morning breaks.

I heard the breakers shouting in the night
Like an old prophet, dead these many years,
Who sang contemptuous songs with grave delight
Of prophecies, and unresponsive ears,
And little structures crumbling to decay
That men had built to keep the cold away.

El Greco

By JAMES FEIBLEMAN

With circular circumstances become insidious,
  Each sees in agony another sphere.
Reflects no image here much less than hideous,
  And blooms no creamy contemplation near.

To slide my tourist into nether rapture,
  Go use the oiling of a smoother school;
El Greco, that esthetic none may capture
  Except he be what passion made a fool.

Book Reviews

NOTES ON WHAT'S O'CLOCK

(What's O'Clock, by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.

WHAT'S O'CLOCK is an admirably balanced book, good to read in that its variety is a perpetual stimulant; rich to read in that it is compact of those things only Amy Lowell could give us. Were it all that she had left it were a generous legacy—but there is more as yet to come: including a volume of New England narratives to be called *East Wind,* another volume of lyrics, and one of prose essays. So the final estimate of her work cannot yet be written.

This volume is representative of Amy Lowell at her best. The exquisite finish of her style is here present unflawed, but its brilliance is somewhat chastened—happily subdued, for it allows the essential simplicity and tenderness of her nature to be the more clearly revealed. She was, in her armour of meteoric aggressiveness, intensely feminine. The sheer brilliance of her decor and the legend of her personality have in some quarters obscured what she has always been—a "human" poet. There can be no mistaking it in *What's O'Clock.* Perhaps too Amy Lowell was growing older. The swift and flexible mind was losing none of its speed, but was gaining in mellowness, was acquiring that quality no young poet ever has —generous pity. Comprehension she had always had.

Her style has always been a curiously supple thing, ranging from the severe to the highly ornate, adaptable to its subject—and her topics have been legion. Metaphor, swift and brilliant, has been its unifying quality in every mood. And it is illuminating that though her exotic interiors, her lavishness of porcelain and brocade bulk large in her work, the windy brightness of the metaphors which dominate her style comes almost always from the out-of-doors:

Your voice is like bells over roofs at dawn
When a bird flies
And the sky changes to a fresher colour.

Even the vividness of her interiors is built out of her sensitiveness to the textures of fruits and the colour of flowers and the clearness of air. It is the same with something so definitely closed in as the sultry passion of a scene of the Arabian nights:

He will lean above you, Scheherezade, like September above an orchard of apples.
He will fill you with the sweetness of spice-fed flames.
Will you burn, Scheherezade, as flowers burn in September sunlight?

In contrast to such (*What's O'clock* is a book of contrasts) is the "Song for a Viola D'Amore", very simple and charming, a love poem of clematis and twilight. Simplicity is turned to another and terrible effect in "Evelyn Ray" which is the story of a cat-bird singing immoderately over a sunny meadow where men kill one another for a woman. It is a ballad, but a sophisticated ballad, the only sort we are likely to get nowadays. And "Time's Acre" is sophisticated also with its glint of the macabre and its intensity. But it is pointless to name the good

poems where there are so many—new ones and old favorites such as "Lilacs". I quote one more passage to indicate the sort of thing one is likely to discover anywhere in the book. (This passage for example is rather lost in a long poem which is not quite worthy of it.)

He found her there,
Her slender shadow stretching to the door
to welcome him; and she, beyond her shadow,
Stood waiting in the crimson sunset light,
A slender silver fox-glove flushed with rose.
There was no sound except the golden boom
Of bees among the honeysuckle flowers
Stirring against the wall. For neither spoke,
Being removed past any reach of speech
Into that silent space of holiness
Where flesh creates the everlasting world.

But of all, "Lilacs" is I think the most significant poem. Amy Lowell had come home to New England. China was an adventure—a splendid plundering foray of the spirit. But in the last years of constant pain she came closer to her own soil and people. The dazzle of her own sun gleams on her window-panes and the scent of her own wet lawns is in her nostrils. She had never forgotten it in her grand tour of the spirit: she was never so close to it as upon return.

ROYALL SNOW.

"YOU WHO HAVE DREAMS"

(You Who Have Dreams, by Maxwell Anderson, New York. Simon and Shuster. 1925.)

MR. ANDERSON'S poetry, though it sometimes lacks rhythmical vitality and is sometimes a little vague in diction, often attains both vitality and precision, and is nearly always civilized. At its worst it is still polite; at its best it is excellent. The poet commands respect even when he does not command admiration. "You Who Have Dreams" is a most creditable volume. The inclusion of the prose epigrams makes it unusual and more interesting. Here are three of them:

EVOLUTION

Now that I am sunk under the sea, a tall and ancient city built of steel and stone, those within my walls are no longer men, but fishes, yet the change is well enough.

ALONE

You think that you are near me, little one—lying on my shoulder, comforted. But there is a gulf between us two, alas, and between all others, deeper and darker than the abyss that holds the evening from the morning star.

THE BAYONET

Do not struggle, dear friend. O do not try to rise. See, the shaft is broken sharp off in your breast; wait a little; lie still and wait for the surgeon while I put this water to your lips. O dear friend, be quiet; your hands are bleeding from the edge.

This is from "Winter Song:"

When the gold has left the bough
And the year is on the wing,
When the frost has caught the plow
Frozen in its furrowing,
Think then of not anything,
Sing as I sing now....

Come the dark, and end the year,
Come the end of sun and sound,
You, who were spring's follower,
Sing, and dog the spring around,
Follow spring into the ground
There to lie with her.

Here is "Prayer from the Cliff:"

Give me to drink darkness,
Blind me with night and sea;
Let the tall tides build upon me,
Covering me.

She I loved is dead—is lying,
Inland, inland....
Heap on me deep-sea waters,
Deep-sea sand.

This is the "Dedication:"

She said though you should weave and freeze
All crimson words in tapestries
With notes of horns and blown airs
And mountain chants of worshippers
The lines of light, the words of flame
Are not so perfect as I am.
She said, though you should sing and set
Dark gold words and pomegranate
With words of cold and words of night
To chords of music sombre and bright

You shall make nothing lovely then
As my dim dancing in the rain
Or this straight body slim and small
Under the mossed waterfall.

There are a number of poems in the volume, good in whole or in part, among them "The Time when I was Plowing," "Prayer after Youth," "Rain Fugue," "End-All," "Beatrice Dead," "In Winter," "Dust Remembering," "St. Agnes' Morning," "Variation on an Old Theme," "Lady Titania," "The Fire is Out in Acheron," "Earth Evanescent," "When we Have Heard That Time is only Seeming," "The Beggar God," "Storm Flower" and "Judith of Minnewaukan."

JOHN MCCLURE.

NEGRO SONGS

The Book of American Negro Spirituals, Edited with an Introduction by James Weldon Johnson. The Viking Press. 1925.

On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs, by Dorothy Scarborough. Harvard University Press. 1925.

Folk-Songs of the South, Collected Under the Auspices of The West Virginia Folk-Lore Society, and Edited by John Harrington Cox. Harvard University Press. 1925.

The Negro and His Songs, A Study of Typical Negro Songs in the South, by Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson. The University of North Carolina Press. 1925.

THESE magnificent volumes indicate that America is beginning to take some notice of its chief autochthonous art. In 1903, thirty years after the Fisk Jubilee Singers had made their first appearance before American and European audiences, one of the leaders of his race, W. E. B. DuBois, said mournful things about the respect accorded Negro music. Dr. DuBois's words, however, proved that his prophesies about music were less dependable than his prophesies about history, economics, or whatever it is he sets forth in the classroom. The seriousness with which Negro music, particularly the Spirituals, is taken by first-rate musicians today points to the inescapable conclusion that this great body of child-like, mystical, passionate songs is America's chief, if not sole, genuine music. And it is only when "improved" conditions and a consequent loss of the ignorant carefreeness of the Negro threaten to place these songs beyond redaction that a widespread effort is made thoroughly and systematically to collect them. Lafcadio Hearn some years ago did valuable work in recording a great many of the songs in Creole patois, and much later H. E. Krehbiel brought out a scholarly collection of what he chose to call "Afro-American Folk Songs." More recently T. P. Fenner, John W. Work, Natalie Curtis Burlin, and T. W. Talley have made excellent collections of the Negro songs. With these earlier books before them, and with abundant pencils and note-books, and with automobiles, no doubt, to visit far-flung settlements, the four newest compilers have more nearly approached inclusiveness. But complete inclusiveness is, of course, impossible; works of this sort must necessarily reject the large Rabelaisian element found in all folk-songs.

Mr. Johnson, in his book of Spirituals, makes the sound point that the Negro's concept of music is rhythm, not melody, a fact that Havelock Ellis and Sherwood Anderson have emphasized under the cloth of essay and fiction. The inherent rhythm of the race cannot escape the person who sees Negroes at work and at church. Every task from the simplest to the relatively complex they perform to the accompaniment of singing that is just as

often mournful as joyous. At church they sway back and forth to the rhythm of incomprehensible chants of mournful cadence. The secular songs—work songs, railroad songs, blues, dance songs—all depend upon rhythm alone, and when melody does creep in, it is in the form of the famous and popular "barber-shop chord."

The Negro songs, whether religious or secular, abound in fantastic pictures of Heaven and Hell, Jehovah and Jesus and Satan. Dr. Odum records songs picturing Christ in the various roles of fire-eater, train conductor, chariot driver, river pilot, divine healer, hurler of thunderbolts, building foreman, and "mourner." Satan is ever on the alert to snatch away gamblers, liars, drunkards, hypocrites, "ho'-mongers," dancers, and all other sinners. God is even more terrible than the God of Hebrew theology, but he is, nevertheless, always on the side of sister, mother, father, brother, "mourner," preacher, and master, and He sees to it that no person, not even the notorious "bad man" of every community, dies unredeemed. Angels, Sunday mornings, deep rivers, universal fires, and the imminent judgment bar play a great part in the imagery of all these songs.

Sheer bravado, heart-breaking loneliness, pistols, policemen, traveling shoes, cocaine, gambling, whiskey, love, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, New Orleans, railroads, and many other equally poetic subjects, when combined by Negro singers, offer a humor that is unconscious and irresistible. These songs are of great social significance and, not infrequently, carry economic significance as well. The song is quite true which gives this combination of tragedy and comedy:

> Nigger an' a white man
> Playin' sebm-up;
> Nigger win de money
> But skeered to pick it up.

And there are others. Through them is gained an intimate knowledge which the Negro, in his recognized dual personality, strives to prevent by an ingenuousness that is baffling. The blustering "bad man" would no more put this song into stark prose:

> I come from sweet ol' Alabam'
> An' I don' give a damn.

than he would translate the "sebm-up" game into terms of political economy and shout the translation from a soapbox on the street corner.

The poetry of the great body of these songs can, of course, be endured only for its naivete. The regular line is the exception, and two successive lines of identical metre are most rare. The tendency is to make the lines rhyme; and the sense suffers. The following example is taken from Dr. Odum's book:

> Ain't it a pity, ain't it a shame?
> Stagolee was shot, but he don't want no name.

There is nothing in the stanzas preceding or following that wil give a clue to the "name." Only occasionally do passages of marked beauty break the monotony of dithyrambs. Dr. Scarborough and Dr. Odum both report the following song:

> Keep er-inchin' erlong, keep er-inchin' erlong,
> Jesus'll come by an' by.
> Keep er-inchin', keep er-inchin' er long,
> Jesus'll come by an' by.

The chief beauty both of words and music, however, is found in the Spirituals. "Steal Away to Jesus," "Go Down Moses," "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," "Singin' Wid a Sword in Ma Han" are typical examples.

The origin of the Negro songs has

given folk-lorists much concern. Where did they come from? Mr. Johnson's essay that the Spirituals are firmly rooted in African civilization carries conviction, and explodes the theory that they are the religious hymns of the whites re-baked. Dr. Odum cites cases of composition by the more talented Negroes that have come under his direct observation. They form a strong argument aganist the theory of an amorphous origin that is so widely held. Dr. Scarborough and Dr. Cox trace many of the secular songs back to English and Scotch ballads and note, despite distortion and embellishment, the remarkable preservation of original detail.

These books are important. Mr. Johnson's introduction to the book of Spirituals is perhaps the most valuable single essay; it is broad and thorough. Dr. Odum's work shows his intimate acquaintance with the Negro and his culture, and reveals painstaking care in assembling the songs.

Dr. Scarborough's book shows the keen interest and diligence of its author, the interest that led her last year to write a story of Negro life in Texas, "In the Land of Cotton," a novel of some consequence. Dr. Cox's collection of songs is not confined to the Negro; the songs he records are, in fact, chiefly those of the mountaineers of West Virginia, though a great many of them were either borrowed from the Negro originally or have since been taken up by him. Of the four books his is perhaps the most thorough work of collection. Dr. Scarborough was assisted by Ola Lee Gulledge in the musical accompaniments that appear in her book. J. Rosamond Johnson and Lawrence Brown had charge of the musical arrangements in Mr. Johnson's collection of Spirituals, and Dr. Odum was assisted by Guy B. Johnson in the business of assembling his collection.

LESTER HARGRETT.

Pages 319-320 omitted in numbering.